

The Condition of Education 2010

Indicator 22 *Educational Attainment*

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Educational Attainment

In 2009, some 31 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed at least a bachelor's degree. Between 1971 and 2009, the gap in bachelor's degree attainment between Whites and Hispanics widened from 14 to 25 percentage points.

Between 1971 and 2009, the educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds increased. For the purpose of this indicator, educational attainment represents the percentage who achieved at least the cited credential. In 2009, for example, 89 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had received at least a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, an 11 percentage point increase from 1971 (see table A-22-1). Although the high school completion rate increased 8 percentage points during the 1970s, it has remained between 85 and 89 percent since the late 1970s.

Higher percentages of Whites had completed high school than Blacks or Hispanics in 1971 and in 2009, although the gaps narrowed over the years. Between 1971 and 2009, the high school completion rate for Blacks increased from 59 to 89 percent, and the gap in high school attainment between Blacks and Whites decreased from 23 to 6 percentage points. During this period, the high school completion rate for Hispanics increased from 48 to 69 percent, and the gap between Hispanics and Whites decreased from 33 to 26 percentage points. Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were not separately available until 1990, in which year 90 percent had completed high school, a higher percentage than that of Blacks (82 percent) and Hispanics (58 percent). Between 1971 and 2009, the high school completion rate for Asians/Pacific Islanders increased from 90 to 95 percent, but the gaps in high school attainment between Asians/Pacific Islanders and other racial/ethnic groups did not measurably change.

Between 1971 and 2000, the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 17 to 29 percent; however, the rate in 2009 was about the same as the rate in 2000. Between 1971 and 2009, the percentage who had attained a bachelor's degree increased from 19 to 37 percent for Whites, from 7 to 19 percent for Blacks, and from 5 to 12 percent for Hispanics. During this period, the gap

in bachelor's degree attainment between Blacks and Whites increased from 12 to 18 percentage points, and the gap between Whites and Hispanics increased from 14 to 25 percentage points. Between 1990 and 2002, the percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders who had attained a bachelor's degree increased from 42 to 56 percent; however, between 2002 and 2009 this percentage remained relatively stable. Between 1990 and 2009, the gap between Asians/Pacific Islanders and Whites increased from 16 to 19 percentage points.

In 2009, some 7 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had completed a master's degree or higher. The percentage of Asians/Pacific Islanders who had attained a master's degree in 2009 (21 percent) was higher than that of their peers from all other races/ethnicities: 9 percent of Whites, 4 percent of Blacks, and 2 percent of Hispanics had attained a master's degree in 2009. Between 1995 and 2009, the rate of master's degree attainment increased for Whites (from 5 to 9 percent), Blacks (from 2 to 4 percent), and Asians/Pacific Islanders (from 11 to 21 percent).

Gender gaps in educational attainment shifted between 1971 and 2009. For example, in 1971, a higher percentage of males completed high school than females, by a difference of 3 percentage points, but by 2009 the rate of high school attainment was higher for females than males, by 2 percentage points. A higher percentage of males than females had attained a bachelor's degree in 1971, by a difference of 7 percentage points, while by 2009 the percentage of females who had attained a bachelor's degree was 8 percentage points higher than that of males.



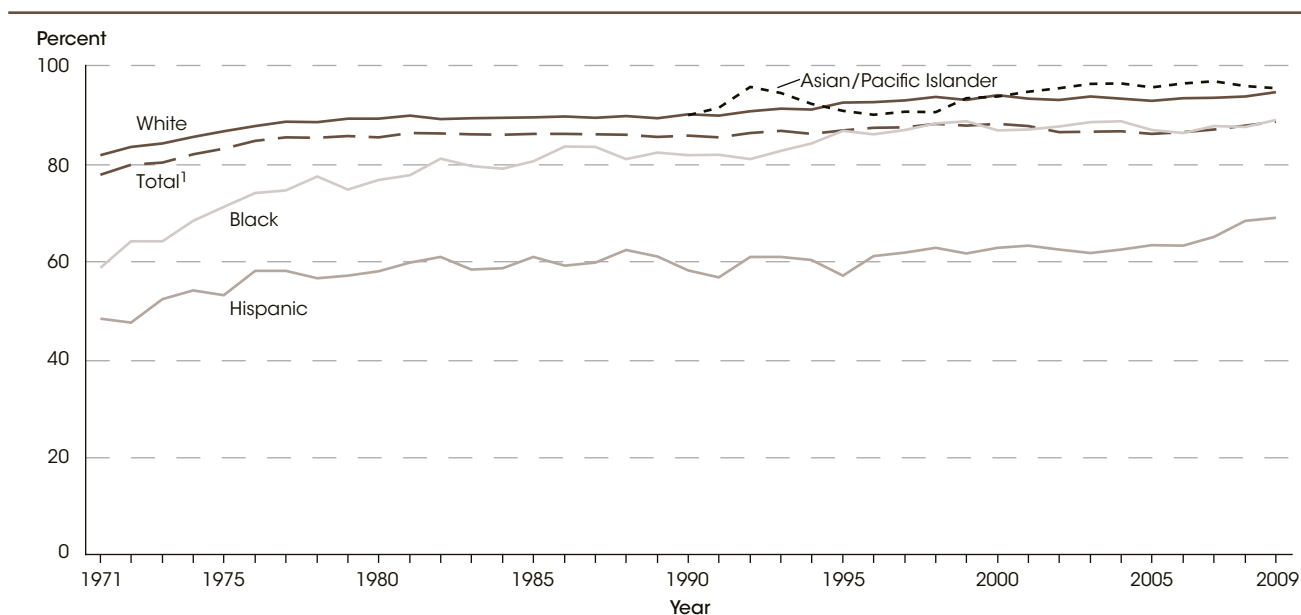
For more information: *Table A-22-1*

Technical Notes

This indicator uses March Current Population Survey (CPS) data to estimate the percentage of civilian, noninstitutionalized people ages 25 through 29 who are out of high school. Prior to 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who completed 12 years of schooling, *some college* meant completing 1 or more years of college, and *bachelor's degree or higher* referred to those who completed 4 years of college; beginning in 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, *some college*

meant completing any college at all, and *bachelor's degree or higher* referred to those who earned a bachelor's degree. For more information on the CPS, see *supplemental note 2*. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. Some estimates are revised from previous publications. Included in the totals but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

Figure 22-1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who completed at least high school, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2009

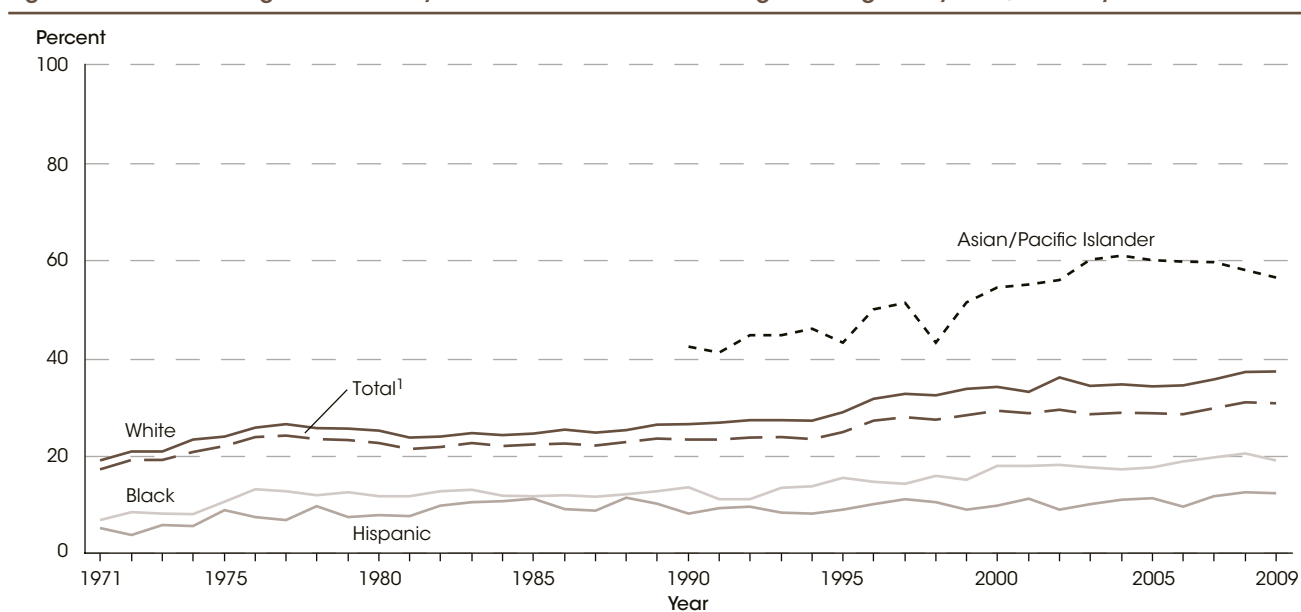


¹ Included in the total but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups.

NOTE: Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were available beginning in 1990. Prior to 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who completed 12 years of schooling; beginning in 1992, the term referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1971–2009.

Figure 22-2. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds with a bachelor's degree or higher, by race/ethnicity: March 1971–2009



¹ Included in the total but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups.

NOTE: Data for Asians/Pacific Islanders were available beginning in 1990. Data prior to 1992 were for completing 4 years of college; beginning in 1992, data were for earning a bachelor's degree. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1971–2009.

Supplemental Table to Indicator 22

Educational Attainment

Table A-22-1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who attained selected levels of education, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, March 1971–2009

Educational attainment and year	Total ¹			White			Black		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
High school diploma or equivalent²									
1971	77.7	79.0	76.5	81.7	83.0	80.5	58.7	56.7	60.5
1975	83.1	84.5	81.8	86.6	88.0	85.2	71.1	72.3	70.1
1980	85.4	85.4	85.5	89.2	89.1	89.2	76.7	74.7	78.3
1985	86.1	85.9	86.4	89.5	89.2	89.9	80.5	80.6	80.5
1990	85.7	84.4	87.0	90.1	88.6	91.7	81.7	81.4	82.0
1995	86.8	86.3	87.4	92.5	92.0	93.0	86.7	88.4	85.3
2000	88.1	86.7	89.4	94.0	92.9	95.2	86.8	87.6	86.2
2005	86.1	84.9	87.3	92.8	91.8	93.8	86.9	86.6	87.3
2006	86.4	84.4	88.5	93.4	92.3	94.6	86.3	84.2	88.0
2007	87.0	84.9	89.1	93.5	92.7	94.2	87.7	87.4	87.9
2008	87.8	85.8	89.9	93.7	92.6	94.7	87.5	85.7	89.2
2009	88.6	87.5	89.8	94.6	94.4	94.8	88.9	88.8	89.0
Some college³									
1971	33.9	38.5	29.4	36.7	41.7	31.8	18.1	16.5	19.5
1975	41.6	47.4	36.0	44.3	50.4	38.3	27.5	29.7	25.8
1980	44.7	47.6	41.9	48.0	51.1	44.9	32.4	32.6	32.3
1985	43.7	44.2	43.3	46.4	46.8	46.0	34.4	34.2	34.5
1990	44.5	43.7	45.3	48.3	47.3	49.3	36.1	35.0	36.9
1995	54.1	52.3	55.8	59.8	57.5	62.1	45.1	45.3	44.8
2000	58.3	55.1	61.5	64.1	60.5	67.7	52.7	50.4	54.6
2005	56.7	52.1	61.4	64.3	59.7	68.9	49.0	41.9	55.1
2006	57.8	53.3	62.4	66.3	62.1	70.4	49.9	44.8	54.3
2007	57.7	52.5	63.0	65.6	61.1	70.0	50.0	45.9	53.6
2008	59.2	53.9	64.8	67.1	62.4	71.9	51.0	44.5	56.7
2009	59.9	54.7	65.3	68.1	63.5	72.9	53.4	45.2	60.6
Bachelor's degree⁴									
1971	17.1	20.4	13.8	18.9	22.4	15.4	6.7	6.9	6.6
1975	21.9	25.2	18.7	23.8	27.3	20.2	10.5	11.1	10.0
1980	22.5	24.0	21.0	25.0	26.8	23.2	11.6	10.5	12.4
1985	22.2	23.1	21.3	24.4	25.5	23.3	11.6	10.3	12.6
1990	23.2	23.7	22.8	26.4	26.6	26.2	13.4	15.1	11.9
1995	24.7	24.5	24.9	28.8	28.4	29.2	15.4	17.4	13.7
2000	29.1	27.9	30.1	34.0	32.3	35.8	17.8	18.4	17.4
2005	28.6	25.3	32.0	34.1	30.4	37.8	17.5	14.3	20.3
2006	28.4	25.3	31.6	34.3	31.4	37.2	18.7	15.2	21.7
2007	29.6	26.3	33.0	35.5	31.9	39.2	19.5	18.9	20.0
2008	30.8	26.8	34.9	37.1	32.6	41.7	20.4	19.0	21.6
2009	30.6	26.6	34.8	37.2	32.6	42.0	18.9	14.8	22.6
Master's degree⁵									
1995	4.5	4.9	4.1	5.3	5.6	5.0	1.8	2.2!	1.4!
2000	5.4	4.7	6.2	5.8	4.9	6.7	3.7	2.1!	4.9
2005	6.2	5.1	7.3	7.4	6.0	8.7	2.6	1.1!	4.0
2006	6.4	5.1	7.8	7.5	5.8	9.2	3.2	1.7	4.5
2007	6.3	5.0	7.6	7.6	5.7	9.4	3.5	3.3	3.7
2008	7.0	5.3	8.7	8.2	5.9	10.4	4.4	3.4	5.2
2009	7.4	6.1	8.8	8.9	7.4	10.4	4.2	3.2	5.1

See notes at end of table.

Table A-22-1. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who attained selected levels of education, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, March 1971–2009—Continued

Educational attainment and year	Hispanic			Asian/Pacific Islander		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
High school diploma or equivalent²						
1971	48.3	51.4	45.8	—	—	—
1975	53.1	52.2	53.9	—	—	—
1980	58.0	57.0	58.9	—	—	—
1985	60.9	58.6	63.1	—	—	—
1990	58.2	56.6	59.9	89.9	95.3	85.1
1995	57.1	55.7	58.7	90.8	90.5	91.2
2000	62.8	59.2	66.4	93.7	92.1	95.2
2005	63.3	63.2	63.3	95.6	96.8	94.5
2006	63.2	60.5	66.6	96.4	97.2	95.6
2007	65.0	60.5	70.7	96.8	95.9	97.7
2008	68.3	65.6	71.9	95.9	95.6	96.1
2009	68.9	66.2	72.5	95.4	96.4	94.5
Some college³						
1971	14.7	19.7	10.5!	—	—	—
1975	21.8	26.3	17.6	—	—	—
1980	23.2	25.9	20.5	—	—	—
1985	26.9	26.9	27.0	—	—	—
1990	23.4	22.9	23.9	62.8	69.3	57.0
1995	28.7	26.7	30.9	76.4	75.4	77.6
2000	32.8	29.0	36.6	78.2	79.3	77.3
2005	32.8	31.8	34.0	80.3	78.2	82.2
2006	31.7	28.3	35.9	80.9	80.0	81.8
2007	33.9	28.2	41.1	80.4	78.6	82.1
2008	35.9	30.8	42.5	80.2	78.9	81.5
2009	34.5	30.7	39.5	78.6	80.2	77.1
Bachelor's degree⁴						
1971	5.1!	8.0!	‡	—	—	—
1975	8.8	10.4	7.3	—	—	—
1980	7.7	8.4	6.9	—	—	—
1985	11.1	10.9	11.2	—	—	—
1990	8.1	7.3	9.1	42.2	47.6	37.4
1995	8.9	7.8	10.1	43.1	42.0	44.5
2000	9.7	8.3	11.0	54.3	55.5	53.1
2005	11.2	10.2	12.4	59.9	58.4	61.3
2006	9.5	6.9	12.8	59.6	58.7	60.4
2007	11.6	8.6	15.4	59.5	58.5	60.3
2008	12.4	10.0	15.5	57.9	54.1	61.6
2009	12.2	11.0	13.8	56.4	55.2	57.6
Master's degree⁵						
1995	1.6	2.0!	1.2!	10.9	12.6	8.9
2000	2.1	1.5	2.7	15.5	17.2	13.9
2005	2.1	1.7	2.5	16.9	19.7	14.4
2006	1.5	1.1	2.0	20.1	20.5	19.7
2007	1.5	0.6	2.6	17.5	18.4	16.5
2008	2.0	1.2	2.9	19.9	20.9	18.9
2009	1.9	1.2	2.7	21.1	20.4	21.7

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

‡ Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

¹ Included in the totals but not shown separately are estimates for persons from other racial/ethnic groups.² Prior to 1992, *high school completers* referred to those who completed 12 years of schooling; beginning in 1992, the term referred to those who received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.³ Prior to 1992, *some college* meant completing 1 or more years of college; beginning in 1992, the term meant completing any college at all.⁴ Data prior to 1992 were for completing 4 years of college; beginning in 1992, data were for earning a bachelor's degree.⁵ Estimates for attainment of a master's degree prior to 1992 are not available.NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals as estimates of educational attainment represent the percentage who achieved at least the cited credential. For more information on educational attainment of 25- to 29-year-olds, see *supplemental note 6*. For more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS), see *supplemental note 2*. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, see *supplemental note 1*.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years, 1971–2009.

Educational Attainment

Table S-22-1. Standard errors for the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who attained selected levels of education, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, March 1971–2009

Educational attainment and year	Total			White			Black		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
High school diploma or equivalent									
1971	0.48	0.67	0.69	0.49	0.67	0.71	1.88	2.78	2.54
1975	0.40	0.55	0.57	0.40	0.54	0.58	1.59	2.35	2.16
1980	0.34	0.49	0.48	0.34	0.48	0.48	1.29	1.97	1.71
1985	0.34	0.49	0.47	0.34	0.49	0.48	1.18	1.75	1.61
1990	0.38	0.56	0.51	0.37	0.57	0.49	1.37	2.03	1.85
1995	0.39	0.56	0.54	0.36	0.53	0.50	1.23	1.72	1.75
2000	0.37	0.55	0.49	0.33	0.51	0.43	1.13	1.67	1.53
2005	0.27	0.40	0.37	0.26	0.40	0.35	0.79	1.18	1.06
2006	0.27	0.39	0.35	0.25	0.38	0.32	0.79	1.24	1.02
2007	0.26	0.38	0.34	0.25	0.37	0.33	0.75	1.11	1.01
2008	0.25	0.37	0.33	0.24	0.36	0.31	0.74	1.15	0.96
2009	0.24	0.35	0.33	0.22	0.31	0.31	0.70	1.03	0.95
Some college									
1971	0.55	0.80	0.74	0.61	0.88	0.83	1.47	2.09	2.06
1975	0.52	0.75	0.71	0.58	0.83	0.80	1.57	2.40	2.06
1980	0.49	0.69	0.68	0.55	0.77	0.77	1.43	2.12	1.94
1985	0.49	0.70	0.69	0.56	0.79	0.79	1.42	2.10	1.93
1990	0.54	0.76	0.76	0.63	0.89	0.89	1.70	2.49	2.32
1995	0.57	0.81	0.80	0.68	0.96	0.95	1.81	2.68	2.46
2000	0.56	0.81	0.78	0.68	0.98	0.93	1.67	2.53	2.22
2005	0.39	0.55	0.54	0.49	0.71	0.67	1.17	1.71	1.59
2006	0.38	0.54	0.53	0.47	0.69	0.65	1.15	1.69	1.56
2007	0.38	0.54	0.52	0.47	0.68	0.64	1.14	1.67	1.55
2008	0.37	0.53	0.52	0.46	0.67	0.62	1.12	1.63	1.53
2009	0.37	0.52	0.51	0.45	0.66	0.61	1.11	1.62	1.49
Bachelor's degree									
1971	0.43	0.66	0.56	0.49	0.75	0.64	0.96	1.43	1.29
1975	0.44	0.65	0.58	0.50	0.74	0.66	1.07	1.65	1.41
1980	0.41	0.59	0.56	0.47	0.69	0.65	0.98	1.39	1.36
1985	0.41	0.59	0.57	0.48	0.69	0.67	0.96	1.35	1.35
1990	0.46	0.65	0.64	0.55	0.79	0.78	1.20	1.87	1.56
1995	0.49	0.70	0.70	0.62	0.88	0.89	1.31	2.04	1.70
2000	0.52	0.73	0.73	0.67	0.93	0.96	1.28	1.96	1.69
2005	0.36	0.48	0.52	0.48	0.66	0.70	0.89	1.21	1.28
2006	0.35	0.47	0.51	0.48	0.66	0.69	0.90	1.22	1.29
2007	0.35	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.65	0.68	0.90	1.31	1.24
2008	0.35	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.65	0.68	0.91	1.29	1.27
2009	0.35	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.64	0.68	0.87	1.15	1.27
Master's degree									
1995	0.24	0.35	0.32	0.31	0.45	0.42	0.48	0.80	0.59
2000	0.26	0.34	0.38	0.33	0.43	0.50	0.63	0.72	0.96
2005	0.19	0.24	0.29	0.27	0.34	0.41	0.38	0.35	0.62
2006	0.19	0.24	0.29	0.26	0.33	0.41	0.41	0.44	0.65
2007	0.19	0.23	0.29	0.26	0.33	0.41	0.42	0.60	0.59
2008	0.19	0.24	0.30	0.27	0.33	0.42	0.46	0.59	0.69
2009	0.20	0.25	0.31	0.28	0.36	0.42	0.45	0.57	0.67

See notes at end of table.

Table S-22-1. Standard errors for the percentage of 25- to 29-year-olds who attained selected levels of education, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, March 1971–2009—Continued

Educational attainment and year	Hispanic			Asian/Pacific Islander		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
High school diploma or equivalent						
1971	4.20	6.21	5.70	†	†	†
1975	2.77	3.99	3.86	†	†	†
1980	2.41	3.45	3.38	†	†	†
1985	1.81	2.62	2.48	†	†	†
1990	1.94	2.69	2.79	1.74	1.78	2.82
1995	1.80	2.51	2.60	1.72	2.37	2.50
2000	1.22	1.76	1.69	1.14	1.83	1.39
2005	0.74	0.99	1.10	0.73	0.91	1.12
2006	0.72	0.98	1.06	0.58	0.73	0.90
2007	0.71	0.97	1.01	0.55	0.89	0.65
2008	0.68	0.93	1.00	0.63	0.92	0.85
2009	0.68	0.92	1.00	0.66	0.85	1.01
Some college						
1971	2.98	4.94	3.51	†	†	†
1975	2.30	3.51	2.95	†	†	†
1980	2.06	3.05	2.77	†	†	†
1985	1.64	2.36	2.28	†	†	†
1990	1.66	2.28	2.42	2.78	3.87	3.92
1995	1.65	2.23	2.44	2.53	3.48	3.67
2000	1.19	1.62	1.72	1.94	2.75	2.73
2005	0.72	0.96	1.08	1.41	2.14	1.87
2006	0.70	0.91	1.08	1.23	1.78	1.70
2007	0.70	0.89	1.10	1.23	1.83	1.65
2008	0.70	0.90	1.10	1.25	1.83	1.71
2009	0.70	0.90	1.09	1.30	1.82	1.86
Bachelor's degree						
1971	1.85	3.38	†	†	†	†
1975	1.57	2.44	2.01	†	†	†
1980	1.30	1.94	1.74	†	†	†
1985	1.16	1.66	1.62	†	†	†
1990	1.07	1.41	1.64	2.84	4.19	3.83
1995	1.04	1.35	1.59	2.95	3.98	4.38
2000	0.75	0.98	1.12	2.34	3.37	3.26
2005	0.48	0.62	0.75	1.74	2.56	2.39
2006	0.44	0.51	0.75	1.54	2.19	2.15
2007	0.47	0.55	0.80	1.52	2.20	2.10
2008	0.48	0.59	0.80	1.55	2.24	2.14
2009	0.48	0.61	0.77	1.57	2.26	2.18
Master's degree						
1995	0.46	0.70	0.58	1.85	2.68	2.50
2000	0.36	0.43	0.58	1.70	2.56	2.26
2005	0.22	0.27	0.36	1.33	2.06	1.72
2006	0.18	0.21	0.31	1.25	1.79	1.75
2007	0.18	0.16	0.36	1.18	1.73	1.60
2008	0.20	0.21	0.38	1.26	1.83	1.73
2009	0.20	0.22	0.36	1.29	1.83	1.82

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement, selected years 1971–2009.